

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for assisting a user with uploading content captured with a user-operated device, the method comprising:

5 capturing content with a user-operated device having a unique device ID assigned to it;

at the user-operated device, initiating a request to transfer the content to a particular Web site;

10 establishing a user account automatically at the particular Web site, including creating a user identifier (ID) based, at least in part, on said unique device ID assigned to the user-operated device;

transferring the content from the user-operated device to the particular Web site system;

associating the transferred content at the Web site with said user ID; and

15 in response to a request from the user for access to the transferred content, providing on-line access to the transferred content.

20 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of transferring the content occurs via wireless communication.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of establishing a user account occurs upon first operation of the user-operated device.

25 4. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of establishing a user account occurs prior to first operation of the user-operated device.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of establishing a user account occurs upon said request to transfer the content.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of establishing a user account occurs prior to said request to transfer the content.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said user-operated device includes a digital camera.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said user-operated device includes connectivity to a cellular phone.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein said unique device ID is assigned to a selected one of the digital camera or the cellular phone.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said unique device ID is pre-registered with the Web site prior to the user capturing any content with the user-operated device.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said pre-registration is effected during manufacture of the device.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein said pre-registration is effected at a retail point-of-sale.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein said user account is established by a provisioning procedure for associating the user account with a unique device ID assigned to the user-operated device.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein said user-operated device includes a digital camera and wherein said user account is established by a provisioning procedure for associating the account with a unique device ID assigned to the digital camera.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein said user-operated device includes a cellular phone and wherein said user account is established by a provisioning procedure for associating the account with a unique device ID belonging to the cellular phone.

5 16. The method of claim 1, wherein said content is transferred to the Web site after said user-operated device is first determined to be an authorized device.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said user-operated device is determined to be an authorized device by an ID module that operates at the Web site.

10 18. The method of claim 17, wherein said ID module communicates with an account management module in an image repository for both creating and recognizing appropriate user accounts at the Web site.

15 19. The method of claim 1, wherein said content transferred to the Web site is temporarily saved in a buffered storage module until the content is determined to be associated with a particular user account.

20 20. The method of claim 19, wherein said content temporarily saved in the buffered image storage module is transferred to an image storage-by-account module in an image repository after the content is determined to be associated with a particular user account.

25 21. The method of claim 20, wherein said content transferred to the image storage-by-account module is stored on a persistent basis in a database.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein said content is accessible via a user's browser when a valid user name and password are presented.

23. The method of claim 1, wherein said user-operated device contacts the Web site via a cellular phone network.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein said cellular phone network is data-capable.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein said cellular phone network connects to the Web site via the Internet.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein said cellular phone network connects to the Internet via an Internet gateway.

27. The method of claim 1, wherein said user account is established by using a user account ticket determined for the user-operated device.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein said user account ticket is generated, at least in part, from the device ID of the user-operated device.

29. The method of claim 1, wherein said content includes digital images.

30. The method of claim 1, wherein said content includes video.

31. The method of claim 1, wherein said content includes audio.

32. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
establishing a user-friendly user name and password for facilitating viewing of content associated with the user account.

33. A system facilitating uploading of digital images from a newly-purchased digital camera, the system comprising:

a digital camera for capturing digital images;

a Web site for hosting said digital images captured by the digital camera;

5 a transport mechanism for uploading the digital images from the digital camera to a user account at the Web site, said user account being pre-provisioned for the digital camera; and

10 a module for automatically associating the digital images uploaded to the Web site with the pre-provisioned user account and thereafter providing on-line access to the digital images.

34. The system of claim 33, wherein said digital camera employs a cellular phone for wirelessly uploading the digital images.

35. The system of claim 34, wherein said digital camera and said cellular phone are selectively coupled to one another.

36. The system of claim 33, wherein said digital camera includes a module that generates a unique device ID that is used for associating the digital camera with the user account that has been pre-provisioned for digital images uploaded from the digital camera.

37. The system of claim 33, wherein said system includes a module that generates a unique device ID that is used, at least in part, for associating the uploaded digital images with a particular user-operated device.

38. The system of claim 37, wherein the user-operated device comprises a cellular phone.

39. The system of claim 38, wherein the user-operated device comprises the digital camera.

40. The system of claim 33, wherein said system includes a provisioning information module that generates a unique device ID that is used by an accounting management module for associating the digital images with a particular cellular phone device used by the digital camera to upload digital images.

41. The system of claim 33, wherein said Web site receives digital images as they are uploaded.

42. The system of claim 33, wherein said Web site continues to store digital images that are uploaded for some period of time.

43. The system of claim 33, wherein said Web site provides on-line access to the digital images.

44. The system of claim 33, wherein said digital camera includes connectivity to a cellular phone, for uploading digital images.

45. The system of claim 33, wherein said digital camera include wireless communication capability.

46. The system of claim 33, wherein said transport mechanism comprises a wireless communication network.

47. The system of claim 33, further comprising:
a database at the Web site for maintaining the uploaded digital images along with an associated unique device ID for the images.

48. The system of claim 33, further comprising:

a module allowing a user to specify a user name and password for the user account that has been pre-provisioned.

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49. The system of claim 33, wherein online access to the digital images is predicated upon user input of a valid user name and password.

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50. A method for automating activation of a user account associated with a user-operated device, the method comprising:

assigning a unique device identifier to the user-operated device;

automatically creating a user account based, at least in part, on said unique device identifier assigned to the user-operated device;

when the user-operated device is first operated, associating the automatically-created user account with said user-operated device, so that the user-operated device may be operated without requiring its user to first set up a user account; and

at some point in time after operation of the device has already commenced, gathering additional user information for the automatically-created user account.

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51. The method of claim 50, wherein said step of associating the automatically-created user account with said operation of the user-operated device includes:

receiving objects transmitted from the user-operated device; and

associating the automatically-created user account with said objects.

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52. The method of claim 51, further comprising:

collecting information indicating who is authorized for the user account; and

allowing access to the transmitted objects for an individual who is authorized for the user account.

53. The method of claim 50, wherein said unique device identifier comprises a phone number associated with the device.